

Small Group notes – 6 May 2018

Welcome

On what occasion have you experienced favour, maybe given the best seats at a concert, musical or event, or upgraded in seating when travelling? When have you experienced discrimination or prejudice. Share examples of experiences together.

Worship

Before we were saved all our righteous acts were like filthy rags. Read Zechariah 3:1-5.

Imagine yourself in the place of Joshua the high priest. What grace! Respond to God's amazing grace and mercy in prayer and song (read or sing Amazing Grace).

Word – Faith and favouritism not compatible – James 2:1-13

James in this passage states that favouritism, discrimination & prejudice are not compatible with authentic Christian faith. All these attitudes were rife in James' day and continue to be in our culture and society today. As a society we value wealth and status. Often it is, whom you know, what you look like or what you have in earthly possessions that is given importance.

James gives us an example: a rich man and poor man. Maybe this is from first hand experience? The suggestion is that the rich man is more important than the poor man. They have made a judgement on outward appearance, they display prejudice towards the poor man. James gives three reasons why favouritism, discrimination and prejudice are not compatible to authentic faith.

- **Theological reason v5**
- **Logical reason v 6-7**
- **Biblical reason v 8-11**

James exhorts the believers to follow three principles for relating to all people, regardless of their standing in society or their cultural, ethnic or social economic background.

- **Let scripture be your standard v12**
- **Let love be your law v12**
- **Let mercy flow v12**

Questions

- Have you ever experienced favouritism, discrimination or prejudice?
- Have you ever shown favouritism, discriminated or been prejudiced in attitude?
- What is the situation James is describing in v2-4?
- Why is this wrong in the Church? Why does this contradict what it means to be 'believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ'? v1
- What are we doing and becoming when we discriminate in the way that James describes? V4
- How does what God has done reveal that favouritism towards the rich is wrong? V5
- Why does it not make sense to show a bias to the rich? V6-7
- How does favouritism reveal the depth of our sinfulness? 8-11
- How do we avoid showing favouritism? What should guide our actions and thinking? V8-12
- What is mercy? How does it differ to grace?

Reminders

Please encourage your group to come along to the 'Thy Kingdom Come' Prayer event on Sat 12 May. 9.30am – 10.30am, pray together at NMBC (Prayer stations until 1pm).